



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



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Charivaria

A SCIENTIST points out that owing to the difference of atmospheric pressure Martians could bombard us with a gun of less muzzle-velocity than we should require to bombard them. Even at the risk of a charge of complacency our comment is, "One war at a time."

A correspondent recalls a hound that frequently led the entire hunt into the garden of an inn called "The Fox" where there was no fox. Ultimately the joker was discarded from the pack.



There is indignation in Berlin that Mexico declared war on the Reich without the formality of signing a Friendship Pact first.

"In many cases it is not the food which disagrees with the consumer but the consumer who disagrees with the food," says a doctor. That, presumably, is why mice try to avoid cats.

Cigarettes are still kept under the counter in some shops because there isn't enough room on the shelves.

With Sincere Sympathy

"Marriage is one of the grounds on which A.T.S. officers may be granted a month's compassionate leave, the War Office announced yesterday."—*Daily Paper*.

A Berlin Gestapo officer has mysteriously disappeared. One theory is that he had heard he had been appointed deputy to HEYDRICH's successor.

"GOERING and MUSSOLINI always get on well together," says a writer. Their careers have much in common. One pushed his way to the front and the other came out on top.

Hitler, Please Note.

"Valhalla" is, as its name implies, a delightfully situated, single storeyed House under red Tile Roof, on a corner site.
Advt. in "Cape Times."

We understand that not until after the war will straps be provided for bus passengers to hang on to in the queue shelters.

A Warwickshire blacksmith claims he can stop motor-cars with his teeth. Another good way is the present petrol restrictions.



Nazi commanders in Russia have been instructed not to allow their men to obtain newspapers containing reports of R.A.F. raids on Germany. In return, GOEBBELS undertakes not to let on about the way things have been going in Russia.

The German people are reported to be asking many questions, particularly about the end of the war. It is anticipated that HITLER, in his next broadcast, will give his second thoughts for the third time.

A family bicycle for six has been built by a man in California. A majority vote of the five back-seat pedallers decides where the machine is to be steered.



Again the Stars

THE usual complaint about astrologers is that they delude the people with false hopes and vain fears. My complaint is that they do nothing of the kind. Of all men they are the most discreet and the most ambiguous.

This has always been the prophetic way. It was notoriously true of the Delphic oracle. If the priestess was visited by a king or general about to do battle, she was likely to say that a great army was destined to suffer defeat; and unless both sides ran away it usually did.

The science of divination should be more exact; or else in the interests of security and paper-saving it should be abolished. It is said that without an astrologer a modern newspaper finds it difficult to flourish, and that proprietors of modern newspapers, who know a little more than the general public, have even been accused of giving private information to their pet astrologers.

It may be so. But if it is so the information is cleverly guarded.

THURSDAY. Be cautious in financial dealings with comparative strangers. For those born under Saturn a domestic event will cause great satisfaction to-day.

This is the kind of daring forecast which I usually read not only in the Sunday but in the daily Press. And if William Brown gets a piece of salt cod that he doesn't much care for in a restaurant, or is given the wrong change in the dark, or loses a bet, or pays for two drinks without any recompense, the astrologer is right. But if none of these things happens the astrologer is still right. He only said "Be cautious," and cautious William Brown congratulates himself that he was.

He observes with joy that he was born under Saturn. Yet his domestic life on this Thursday has been not unclouded. The dog has died, his wife is sick. The telephone has been disconnected, there is a hole in one of his shoes. But two or three times his petrol lighter has worked at the first attempt to set its machinery in motion. The soothsayer was right after all.

The first miraculous prediction which meets my eye this morning is "Praise from someone who admires you helps to keep you cheerful to-day." Unless I put the paper which says this at once into the waste-paper receptacle (choosing a moment when the dustman is elsewhere) somebody is sure to fulfil this prophecy, even if it is only to get another clothing coupon out of me. And how does the star-gazer continue? "You certainly ride on the crest of the wave." I certainly do nothing of the sort; but the language, he would doubtless point out to me, is purely metaphorical. It may have meant "You certainly have a good opinion of yourself" or "You certainly ride on the top of a bus." One of these two remarkable forebodings is almost certain to be accurate. But even if I fell into a static water-tank and was drowned I suppose somebody would fish me to the top of the water before the day was done.

I hold the view strongly that astrologers ought to make definite statements, and be fined or imprisoned or executed if their statements turn out to be untrue. It may be objected that this puts them at a disadvantage when compared with politicians and racing tipsters, whose only punishment when their prophecies fail is to be sent to the House of Lords or transferred to another paper. But I don't see why astrologers shouldn't be put at this disadvantage. These other prophets are only supposed to be

students of international affairs or of the limbs, faces and riders of quadrupeds, which cannot be expected to be as regular and reliable as the stars. The courses of the stars are ordained.

If the stars say anything at all the man who interprets them should get it right or suffer for it like the man who interprets railway signals or traffic lights. Nobody could be allowed to fill up a newspaper column with such remarks as: "The presence of a red light at the cross-roads indicates that caution should be exercised in proceeding, and dark-haired motorists must wait until the auspices are more favourable for their undertaking." Or "WEDNESDAY. This will be a bad day for travellers in railway trains whose drivers are born under Aries and neglect to observe the customary indications given to them by the signal-boxes." And that is about all that astrologers do say, whether they are dealing with home or foreign affairs. Far too many columns are filled by writers who tell us to expect great activity on a well-known battlefield because Mars has gone into the house of Venus, and that the result of a distant conflict will be fraught with many consequences to one or more of the Great Powers.

Several astrologers even failed to forecast the new treaty with Russia which had been signed three weeks before they wrote.

Fuel is squandered, man-hours thrown away, munition factories kept waiting in order to print thousands and thousands of sentences that say nothing at all about events that are shaking the world. Reflective essays are omitted, reviews of such films as *How Hot Was My Coffee* are left out. The man with the star-map should be made to say what is going to happen at Kharkov or Tobruk and when, and if he gets it right he should be rewarded with a knighthood and if not he should be prosecuted, convicted and fried in oil. Lightly fried, but fried.

Thus would astrology rank amongst the very honourable but rather dangerous professions like the handling of armies or the holding of a Cabinet portfolio.

And we should all have a great deal of fun. EVOE.

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Think Not That They Are Lonely

("The peoples of the occupied lands defy their German oppressors by placing flowers on the graves of British aviators.")

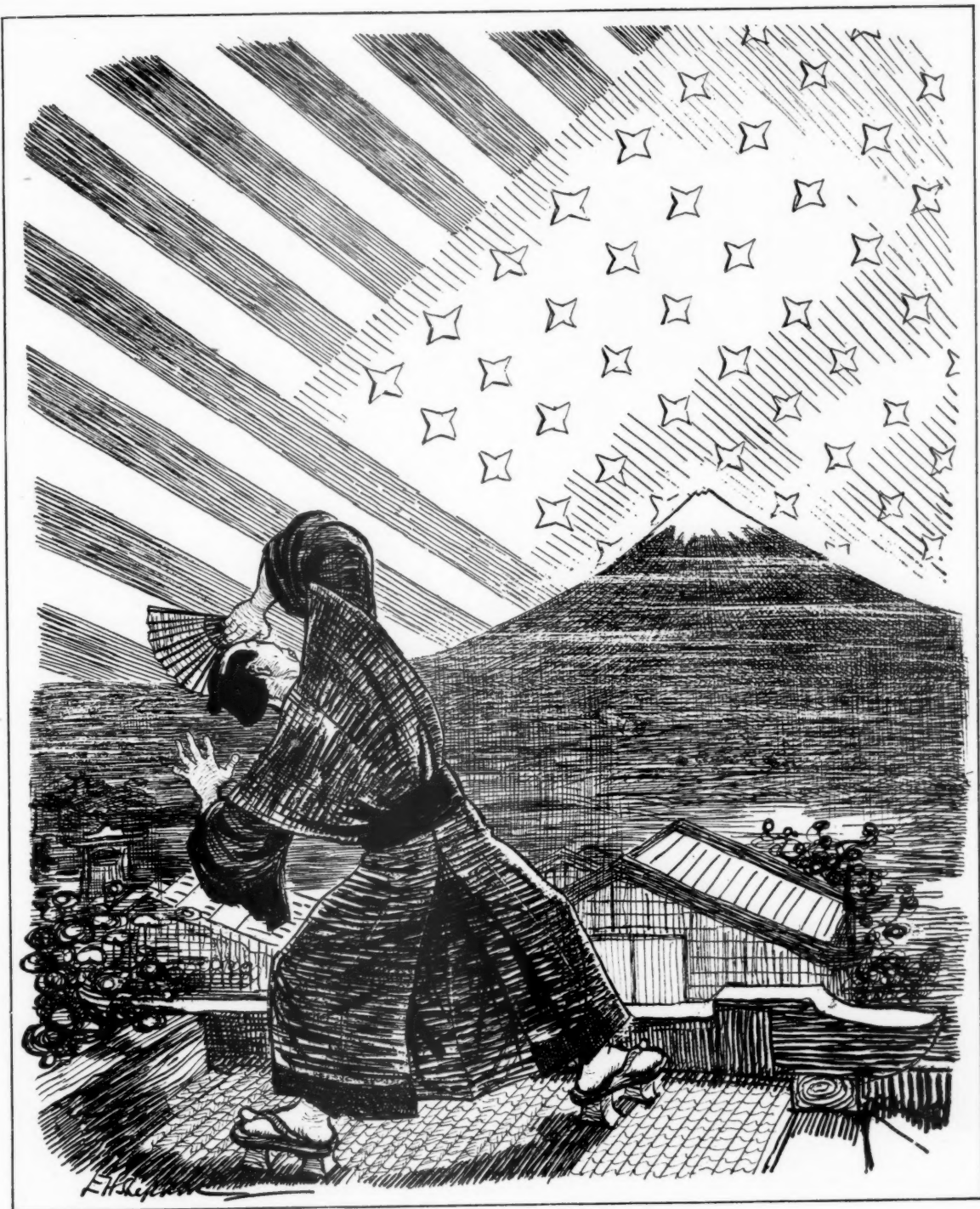
THINK not that they are lonely where they lie,
Your tears are not the only ones to bless
Their sacrifice, for no one passes by
But pays his homage to their quietness.

As demi-gods they rest, and on each shrine
Are laid the votive gifts that children bring;
All Europe's flowers are heaped there for a sign
That their swift fame need fear no tarnishing.

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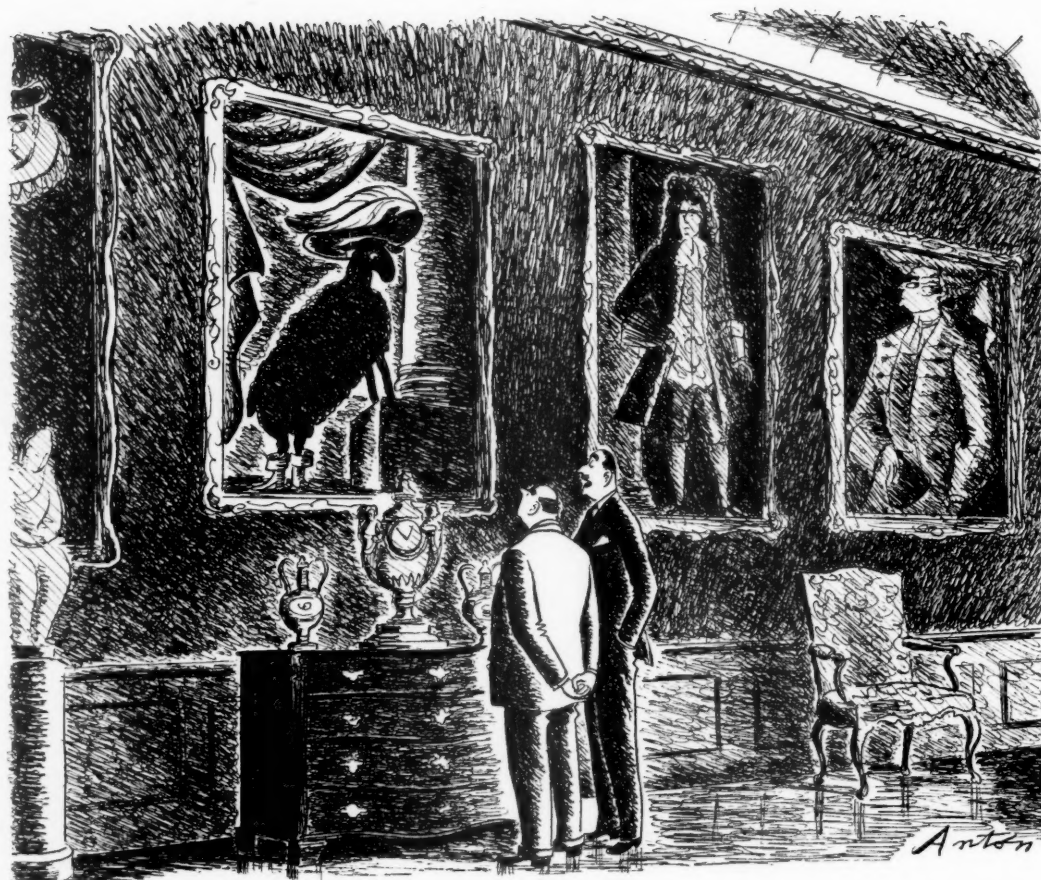
Linguistic Front

"The conferences are frequently highly tense affairs since Mussolini often becomes excited and speaks too quickly, while Hitler lapses into his throaty Australian dialect which the Duce cannot understand at all."—*South African Periodical*.



DOUBTFUL DAWN IN JAPAN

"Can that really be the rising sun?"



"In the family we just refer to it as 'Vandyck's Frolic'."

Industrial Relations

VI

THE extreme reluctance of our workers to shed their reverential attitude towards tradition constitutes a most serious obstacle to the progress of scientific method. Patriotism and a belief in final victory are not enough. The factory workers hammer out their planes; the transport workers pull their weight; the office workers file their forms—all with exemplary zeal. But they prefer to hammer, to pull and to file in the outmoded and inefficient manner of their forbears. As Mr. Diplocket himself has so wittily put it, "Our workers have big hearts, but hearts are not trumps." Time and time again my work as Scientific Consultant and Welfare and Industrial Relations Officer has been nullified by the hide-bound obstinacy and blimpish

conservatism of the employees. This fact is clearly demonstrated in a further series of unedited extracts from the Suggestions Box of the Snacker and Diplocket Small Things Co. (1928), Ltd.

"This is to inform you that I have been unable to carry out your instructions regarding nails," writes the foreman of Packing Shop K. "All box-makers have now reverted to the practice of keeping a reserve of nails, tacks and screws in their mouths. The younger workers were quite willing to try your suggestion of a small satchel strapped to the waist, but, led by Packer 103, the older men were recalcitrant from the first. The ringleader, who has been nailing packing-cases for sixty years, informed

me that nail-sucking had kept him free from rheumatism all his life and that if he was to be prevented from sucking the firm's nails he would have to bring his own supply. I await your further instructions."

The second note comes from Miss Melba Williams, an automatic-fettler-minder. She writes: "While I appreciate the sentiments which prompted you to put up the new poster in our shop, I must say that a little help is worth a deal of pity. That notice, 'Keep Your Hair On—by wearing your cap to cover it,' is all very well, but it does not take my thirty-shilling 'perm' into account. If you had given me some inkling of your intentions a week ago it would have been all right and I would have

had a 'bun' instead. As it is, the best thing you can do is to provide wire hair-guards—like the ones that cover the fly-wheels—or refund me the thirty shillings."

Note 3 is rather disturbing. It is written in deep slashing strokes—almost in cuneiform—and reads, "After Heydrich—Shop-foreman Weatherby, the butcher of Snacker and Dip-locket's."

"I wish to lay a complaint against the clerk who makes out my time-card," writes No. 10523. "My job (riveting clamp-cap plates on tank rejects) is officially classified as 'semi-skilled.' I am not quarrelling with this but with the recent tendency to place the words 'semi-unskilled' after my name. You may think I am splitting hairs and I admit that it comes to the same thing, but it makes all the difference in the world to my self-respect. Will you, therefore, see that the approved official designation is restored?"

"May I quote a few words of Professor John Hilton's," writes Mechanic 0295, "in support of my appeal for improved working conditions? They are these . . . 'in one corner was a pump, serving some general works purpose, that erratically made a resounding "boom, clack, zizz." I asked whether this was not likely to be a distraction to those doing fine and accurate work, but my inquiry evoked no response, so I did not press it. Yet the noise of that pump, I'll be bound, was on the nerves of everyone in that tool-room and was substantially lowering the rate and the quality of the output.' Well, it is just the same with me if you substitute Jim Handrail's catarrhal snuffles for the pump. Anything which makes a resounding 'boom, clack, zizz' would be a blessing to me and to the war effort. Would it be possible to keep the factory hooter at full blast for a few hours of relief each day?"

The last note comes from a Mr. Tom Kavanagh, who writes: "I have a somewhat unusual request to make. Would you please raise my wages by one shilling and threepence per week so as to make them equal to those of my son Clifford (aged sixteen)? He is getting far too big for his boots and informs me that he is shortly to demand a rise of three and fourpence so that he may receive as much as his sister, whose earnings are nearly half those of her mother. Any such request should be refused in the boy's own interest, whereas the small increment for which I am asking would restore my prestige and reunite a family of war-workers."

Journeys End in Lovers' Meeting

Or The Dinner Party

"CLARE, let me introduce Sir Robert Frazer. But once—in Wiltshire years ago—you met, Don't I remember?"

"Yes. I can't forget."

"Our hostess acts the imbecile. It pays her."

"You always were so horrid about people."

"And you were always drawing out their best."

"Bob, do behave like any other guest. . . ."

Do you remember Waydon Priors steeple

And how it rises out of Salisbury Plain?"

"I dislike steeples seen at any angle."

"How strange that we should only meet to wrangle!"

"Frankly, I trust we never shall again."

"Oh, do say something in this awful lull!"

You always had the gift of being dull."



"Look, Mummy! This is one they teach us!"



More Reviews of the Month

FROM most of the reviews this month it would, on the whole, be possible to deduce that there was a war on.

An editorial in *The Lethargic Review* hails with approval the passing of the "All-In" Act as an answer to its two-year-old campaign for the immediate calling-up for the Forces of the whole population, with the subsequent grudging release only of those who would prefer *not* to be civilians. "Only when every person in the country is being compelled to do what he or she strongly dislikes," says the editorial, "shall we be at the highest pitch of efficiency." Mr. J. A. Scrubfaster contributes a paper on "Austerity" in which he advocates the decreasing of the number of lace-holes in shoes, so as to save punching labour and machinery. An account of a Gallup survey held on board ship is (rather regrettably) entitled "Survey They Have in the Navy."

The main position in the *Hebdomadary* is still occupied by that correspondence which began, if we remember rightly, with a letter expressing doubt whether it was possible to do a cross-word puzzle in shorthand; the current letters seem to be about hay-box cookery, though not very. Delays in the provision of Army allowances are discussed by a writer whose pseudonym is "Lance-Corporal" in an article headed by a quotation from Sydney Smith ("Not only was there no pay, but there were many stripes"). Mr. R. Glumm writes of salvage, and recommends the increasing of the number of lace-holes in shoes, the leather punched out of them being subsequently pulped and used to stiffen synthetic rubber tyres. Mr. Ole Smojk, the well-known film-director, demands that each item in the broadcast news should be read with a different accent.

In *Clever's* a grammatical and printing problem is discussed by Mr. Abel Cluckstuffer, who devotes seven pages to the question of the best way to print the plural

of the letter A. "Of course we are all agreed that the apostrophe is out," Mr. Cluckstuffer writes, "but not all of us have realized that this makes the problem almost insoluble. The letter with an *s* after it simply gives us the word *As*." On the seventh page some conclusion is, we dare say, reached. "Peter the Painter's" art causerie is this month devoted to the black-and-white work of Veiri, who had, he says, "a line like a crack in a bathroom tile." An anonymous article on economy recommends a decrease in the number of lace-holes in shoes, so that laces may be chafed in fewer places.

The current *Pub Quarterly* is a "horticultural number." Apropos of a recent broadcast by Mr. Middleton in which he said "Flowers are the greatest propagandists for peace and goodwill," Mr. Gardiner Ake describes with whimsical charm the giant elephant-eating orchid found in fever-ridden bogs in South America. Another gardening article is contributed by Mr. J. A. Ababbledo Greenfields, who recommends vegetable-marrow-growing on the top of water-towers, "very few of which at present nourish anything but a sparse crop of lightning-conductors." An increase in the number of lace-holes in gardening-boots is demanded by Mr. Collyflahr O. Grattan, who points out that this would lessen the weight to be carried by each foot and hence improve dig-for-victory efficiency.

In the *Escalator*, Mr. S. Gumfudgeon examines the popular idea that any very noticeable accent is necessarily funny, instancing in the recent film *The Foreman Went to France* the occasion when a Cockney soldier is careful to pronounce his aitches in the presence of death though not elsewhere. An account by Mr. Clozing Thyme of the war-time manufacture of shoe-laces includes the reminder that if the number of lace-holes were decreased much shorter laces would be needed. "Fuliginus" remarks in an article on popular songs that people who are angered by zazoo-zaz and vo-de-o-do are often only too ready to sing fol-de-riddle-i-do and fal, lal, lal, lal, la.

The *Periogical* has a study of "Anecdotes," by Mr. Tail, who observes that although a story with "Sir" in it is usually about Dr. Johnson, the simple addition of the symbol "d—d" will convert it into one about the Duke of Wellington. The Editor suggests that for the remainder of the war shoes should be made without uppers: "after all, the only serviceable part of a shoe is the sole."

Wild Words is worried about the way in which thirsty London pigeons appear to be depleting emergency water-supply tanks, and also includes an article suggesting that as the purpose of the shoe is purely decorative, the sole of the foot being constantly renewed and reinforced by nature, shoes should henceforth consist only of uppers.

In *Powder Magazine* an interesting list of "minor war-time phenomena" is given by Mr. Y. Dopen-Species, who includes the newspaper phrase "continued on back page" and the small hole in the slate roof.

An expert on child welfare writes in *Bright and Early* on painting nursery doors, recommending without apparent cynicism that they should be inscribed in dignified lettering "The Nursery, or Diddums Den."

In *Gumboil and Bicycle*, Miss Ena Glass Derkeley writes under the title of "National Wheatmeal Bred" a charming account of her early days in the old-world Sussex village of Mottled Batter.

In *Zimpany's*, Mr. Flanstead Watts writes about Wanstead Flats.

R. M.

The Younger the Kinder

"WANTED, any kind live reptiles or batrachians, preferably young; write, giving particulars."—Advt. in "The Lady."

Verbal Insomnia

IN work of national importance some people include, it seems, the mass production of words.

With news-print so difficult to obtain that the morning papers consist of front and back with nothing between, like an April Fool Sandwich, it is natural that those who bubble over with things to say must now rely more and more on talking. So much so that we have just been given a talk on talking.

The man who gave it is standing over there in the corner now, and you can tell he is the one because he is still going on talking, like one of those people who wind themselves up in Hyde Park so much that they cannot run down, even when they want to. One moment they are talking to a crowd, and the next the crowd has split up into little sub-crowds and is talking to itself. But when night falls and they have dispersed, the man who started it is still going on, and has by then collected round him a few late arrivals who have heard nothing yet, and are anxious to find out how it all began. The funny thing is that instead of getting enraged at such a rude lot of people, folding up his stool and going away with tight lips, never to speak again, the speaker is always the last man left and is still talking when every sub-crowd has finished and there is no one even left to talk to.

It is just the same with this chap, but I am sorry to say that two people who did not grasp what he was getting at have been so unwise as to ask him, so now he will be here all night.

I thought the most important thing he did say was that, with a lecture, the

only things that really matter are the beginning and the end. Whilst I agree with him, I consider this is equally true of a bilious attack, and does not take us very much farther. With regard to his theory that you must know at the beginning how you are going to end, I would suggest that in any case you begin as near the end as possible.

I can never understand why people apologize for ending. It is nice to apologize for starting, but why conclude by saying they are "afraid" that is all they have to say? This is something on which all present should heartily congratulate themselves—the majority because they have nothing more to listen to, and the other because he can clap on his hat and run for the bus.

This fellow this evening said—and I agree with him—that the middle part of the lecture is unimportant. It sort of spouts itself. On thinking it over you can compare the thing, I suppose, with an accidental shot in the dark. The mishap with the trigger and the arrival of the bullet at its woeful destination is all that concerns us, except for a rather embarrassing noise in the middle. And it is much the same with a lecture, except that the noise is not confined to one ominous hum; the lecturer's notes keep rustling as well.

My belief is, by the way, that notes may legitimately be employed by the speaker as something to flourish at the audience, compelling them to look at him—if only in amazement; but they should not be referred to. When

a man stops to glance covertly at a piece of paper which he holds sideways, he reminds me of a singer who has not previously sung the particular song he is trying to sing now; one therefore feels much more interested in how long it will take him to find the next line than in what the result will be when he does. The real value of notes, anyway, comes when he chucks them behind him in a fury and brandishes his fist at the faces below.

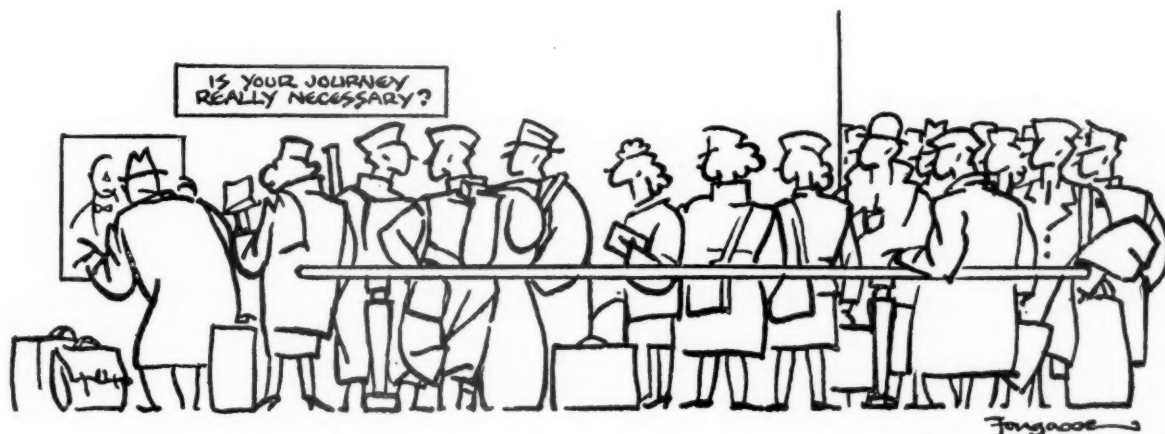
"You should have seen him!" we say afterwards. "He absolutely *flung* them aside, and then he fairly let them have it."

What bathos is seen, on the other hand, when the lecturer who is supposed to have known at the start how he was going to finish, has to read his climax from notes which he cannot decipher owing to the rotten light and his own appalling writing!

The best beginning to a lecture I ever heard was one on "The Soldier's Rights," which the speaker opened—presumably on the assumption that the topic was "Feet"—by saying the soldier had only one right and that was the Army right. Later, when he warmed to his subject, he admitted he had one other, which was to die for his country.

The best ending in my experience was not provided by the lecturer at all, but by one of the audience who, when asked if there were any questions, said: "Yes, I wonder if you could tell me please, where I left my hat."

I wish that chap over there would ask that now. I would *very* soon find it for him.



"... Now, if it means 'Is your journey really NECESSARY?' then the answer's Yes, and I want a third return to Morecambe Bay—but if it means 'Is your journey REALLY necessary?' then I merely want a single back to Pinner."



"Poltergeists, I believe they're called."

The Specialist in Wars

THERE is a buzz of interest in the Mess this evening, as our new subaltern is amongst us for the first time. We expect to get a good few tips from him. For the past twenty-five years he has been specializing in wars in places like China, Spain and Dunkirk. It has been thirsty work.

War has left its mark on Lieutenant Plaster. One of his ears has been clipped by a bullet and looks rather odd. But then the return half on the other side is not everybody's fancy, and it may have been meant for the best.

Second-Lieutenant Whoopit, of the Alliance Knitting and Forwarding Co.'s Works Unit, has noddled him and is talking strategy. Second-Lieutenant Whoopit says that as he was with the government forces at Bandolero perhaps he can explain how they managed to hold on for six months while the insurgents were sitting astride of their supply lines at Bandana with booms across the river at Bolero. It has always puzzled Second-Lieutenant Whoopit. Lieutenant Plaster says that it has always puzzled him too. His theory is that they wangled it somehow.

The Doctor wants to know whether the Geneva Convention was observed in Spain regarding enemy wounded and prisoners. Lieutenant Plaster does not remember it being raised—not under that name, but he doubts whether it could have taught them anything new as both sides were pretty wide to all the dirty dodges.

Lieutenant Wiggle, who is suspected by some of being psychological, says that what he would be interested to know is what Lieutenant Plaster thought about mostly when he was being shelled and dive-bombed for days on end on the shores of Crete. Lieutenant Plaster says that mostly he was thinking about how nice it would be if there were a consulate you could nip along to and claim British nationality.

Lieutenant Crasher says that Lieutenant Plaster, with his experience of raising raw levies, is going to be a great help to him in training his Commandos. In the Home Guard a touch of realism is just what we need. Lieutenant Plaster says that he will do what he can, but he has never held a command in a British unit before and he may find it strange at first, knowing the language.

Lieutenant Plaster agrees with Second-Lieutenant Whoopit that the Gran Chaco was a very interesting campaign. It happened to be the bayonet charge of his battalion that decided the battle of Toreador at the outset of the campaign. If they could have risked letting the men have ammunition at that stage the whole thing would have been over in a few months.

Lieutenant Crasher says that he thinks Lieutenant Plaster should take over certain definite subjects as an instructor. Lieutenant Plaster says he will do his best with any subjects we like. The last time he was an officer he was complimented by General Franco himself for his work as an instructor in looting. Lieutenant Wiggle says that he thought that Lieutenant Plaster was on the government side in that war. Lieutenant Plaster admits that that is so, up to a point, but the local British authorities had explained to him that the home government was anxious for our people not to seem to be too much on one side, so he had changed over.

Second-Lieutenant Whoopit is asking about the strategy leading up to the Bolivian victory at Mañana. Lieutenant Plaster says that he can explain that as he was a general at the time. (He was never lower than horse-holder throughout this campaign.) It seems that they tried out the idea of shooting all the chaps on the other side and it worked very well.

Captain Hackett says that as Lieutenant Plaster has served with the Chinese he ought to be able to put us up to a wrinkle or two in case we ever get up against the Japs. Lieutenant Plaster says that they blow up best, if you have the stuff to do it. They are so small and flick about so much that they are tiresome to shoot at.

Lieutenant Wiggle says that what with his service on the Spanish government side and against the Japanese and in this war he must have spent a good deal of his life fighting for democratic ideals. Lieutenant Plaster says Yes, he has got quite used to it, though of course it was puzzling at first.

Captain Gollop says he has often wondered how the Norway show compared with Dunkirk. Lieutenant Plaster says it is difficult to compare, everything depending on what you like. Where Norway had it was that the ships were more comfortable; on the other hand the grub came along better at Dunkirk. The pay was the same in both cases.

Lieutenant Plaster and Lieutenant Crasher have got into a deep discussion on mutinies. It seems that Lieutenant Plaster has picked up some rather amusing ways that they have of dealing with mutinies in Mexico. Lieutenant Crasher says that he does not think that the Ammunition Officer would allow some of them, and anyhow he is afraid Lieutenant Plaster will be disappointed in us over mutinies, as they are very rare, but he is sure that Lieutenant Plaster will not be wasted in other ways.

A. M. C.

Do You Remember Hitler?

"SO you want to hear about the People's War, do you, my dears?" said the old, old man. "Well, so you shall. But throw another log on the fire first and switch off the wireless, do, for I never could bear a foreign language with a North-country accent, and I certainly can't bear it now. So switch off, Emily, switch it off, and let us have peace in my time at least. There. I thank you, child."

"Why did they call it the People's War, Grandfather?"

"Why do they give the news in Japanese, Grandfather?"

"Why do you have a roaring fire on Midsummer Day, Grandfather?"

"One at a time, children, one at a time," said the old man. "They called it the People's War because that was the winning suggestion in a competition run by the *Daily Mirror*, and the Editor's decision was final; and they give the news in Japanese because that is the only language the Japanese understand. As for your third question—"

"But why does it matter if the Japanese—" began little Felicity, but the old man cut her short with a sudden fierce movement of his hands.

"Enough!" he said. "Let me tell my story in my own time and in my own way. I was a wheel-tapper at Clapham Junction, with my foot set firmly on the first rung of the ladder, and I was, I remember, tapping the near-side rear wheel of the last coach but one on the 8.37 up when the call came that was to reshape my whole career and lift me to undreamed heights of fame and affluence."

"It was His Country's Call," said Sibyl, raising a quivering finger in the air.

"It was a call from Edmonton 22065," said the old man, consulting a morocco-bound notebook, "and it asked me to throw aside my hammer and enter my name in the books of an aeroplane factory at a wage of fifty-two shillings a week plus time-and-a-half for overtime. Throw on more logs, Emily. It is still only half-past four in the morning by the sun."

"Did you make planes then, Grandfather?" asked Patience, resting her chin on her hand and gazing at him with her serious hazel eyes.

"I did not make the whole plane," replied her grandfather, "though I would gladly have done so had it been required of me. My task was, in simple terms, to cut a notch in a bolt which held in place a bracket upon which rested, so I was told, a contrivance that increased the effectiveness of our Hurribombers by over 179 per cent."

"Why were they called Hurribombers, Grandfather?"

"It is a manner of speech, child," said the old man shortly. "Suffice it to say that in the first week I cut two hundred notches, in the second three hundred and eighty-six, and by the end of the third month I was cutting notches at the rate of one hundred and fifteen a day. When the manager heard of it, he sent for me immediately."

The old man paused and let his kindling eye rest upon each of the company in turn. "You could still get shellfish," he said at last—"lobsters and so on. But geese! Never saw a goose from one year's end to another. And I'm fond of a goose—well-stuffed and taken with a comfortable wine. Who got 'em? That's what I want to know."

"Of course," he added, "we sent a tremendous quantity of stuff to Russia."

"Do you mean we sent all our geese to Russia, Grandfather?" asked Felicity with pretty earnestness.

"I don't see why," said the old man. "Surely they could have got along without them. Send 'em tanks, by all means,

send 'em aircraft and boots and long-handled shovels for use in case of emergency, but don't choke the quays at Bandur Shapur with the carcasses of frozen geese. Beware," said the old man, looking sternly at Felicity, "of putting an unutterable strain on your lines of communication. At the beginning of our occupation of Persia," he went on, reading rapidly from his notebook, "the single-track railway that links Bandur Shapur with Teheran and beyond was capable of sustaining an average daily traffic of little over one hundred—where are you going, Sibyl?"

"I was just slipping out to the post, Grandfather."

"What post?" said the old man, "I know nothing of this business. Is your journey really necessary?"

The child resumed her seat and grandfather, rapidly recovering his good-humour, handed chocolates all round. "For internal consumption only," he warned them.

One of the children asked what the manager of the aeroplane factory had said to him on the day he cut a hundred and fifteen notches.

"A very good question, Patience. Excellent, excellent, excellent. Very good indeed. You should go far. I will speak to your headmistress about you in the morning."

"But Grandfather, Miss Thwaites is in Scotland—you know she is."

"Then I will speak to her in the afternoon," said the old man testily. "There is plenty of time. Where was I?"

"You were telling us about Persia."

"It was Miss Thwaites."

"What *did* the manager say?"

"Tell us about the time you met grandmother."

"I was only an air-raid warden when we were blown together," began the old man thoughtfully, "and I little dreamt that I was destined to win the hand of a lady whose name was a by-product in salvage circles for untiring collections of bones, waste paper and clarified fats. Tall as she was gracious—"

"Charles!" said granny, stirring in her corner and frowning gently at her knitting. "Enough!"

"Put the clock back another couple of hours," said the old man briskly. "It's bed-time. Felicity! Patience! Emily! Sibyl!—where's Sibyl? Eh? Where's the girl got to now?"

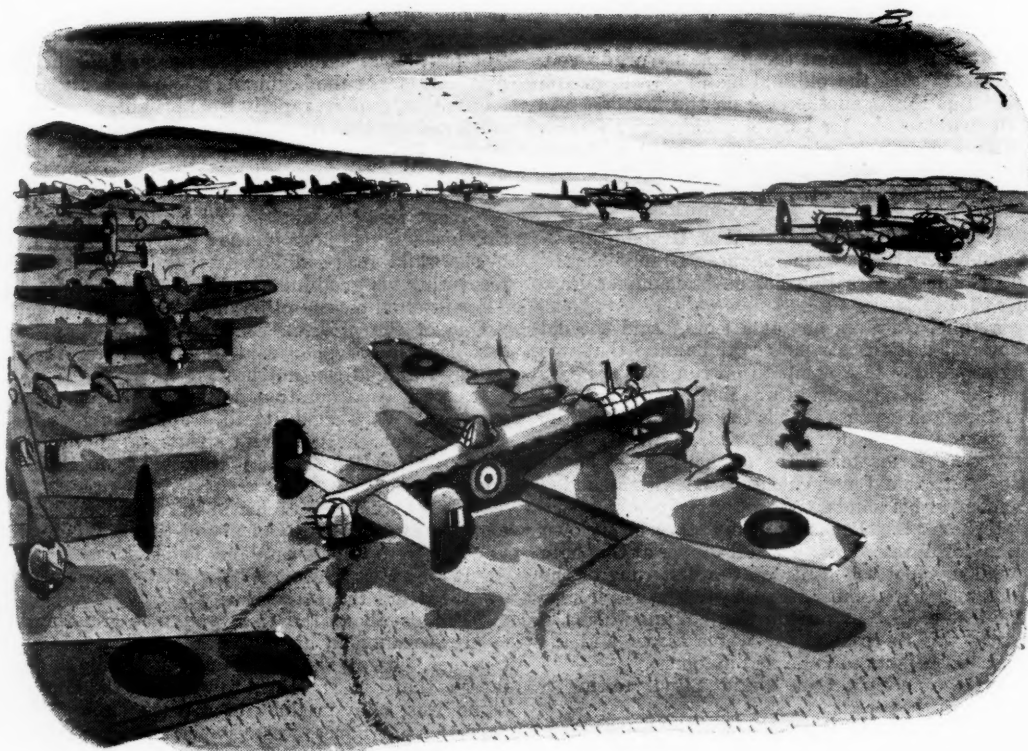
"I think she slipped out, Grandfather."

"Slipped out?" said the old man. "Upon my soul, I don't know what the world's coming to. Roll up the map of the Aleutian Islands and get to bed, the whole pack of you."

H. F. E.



"I told you at the time you were pruning off the wrong branches."



"Just for that you go to the end of the queue."

H. and C.

(But Mostly C.)

IN the days of my youth (which was some time ago)
My grandfather told me, "Young fellow,
If you wish that your life should be lived *comme il faut*
And prolonged to the sere and the yellow,
Rise up in the mornings and when you have riz,
Ere your energies fade and diminish,
Leap straight into water as cold as there is—
And you shall keep fit to the finish."

On his kindly advice I proceeded to act
And though frequently tempted to chuck it,
I followed his rule, and the pertinent fact
Is that somehow or other I've stuck it;
I've done it for ages, I'm doing it now
And though many have mocked me unduly
The time may be coming—and oh! what a wow—
When the laugh will be back with yours truly.

For if fuel is rationed, in castle and cot
Will be innocents led to the slaughter
Who, whatever they have or whatever they've not,
Will be horribly short of hot water:

Be they beggar or plutocrat, wanton or chaste,
Let their summers be three-score or thirty,
By the simple alternative all will be faced—
To take a cold bath or go dirty.

Well, there isn't much choice, for when all's said and done
A fellow must wash—there's an end on it;
But *how* they'll regret when the hot doesn't run
That they brought themselves up to depend on it;
The humbugs of course will pretend that it's swell
While the honest sit dolefully splashing;
But, humbug or honest, they'll hate it like hell
With weeping and wailing and gnashing.

But I shall be merry, I'll laugh at their woes
For I have been practised and hardened
(And suffered enough in the process, Lord knows,
So maybe my mirth will be pardoned).
"Three cheers," I will cry "for the ice from the tap
That bucks you and beats the bacilli;
Cold water, cold water's the thing for a chap!"
Or will I? . . . Or will I? . . . Or *will* I?

H. B.



GOOD MIXERS

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, June 9th.—House of Lords: Hard Words—but no Broken Bones.

House of Commons: This, That and the Other—Mostly the Other.

Wednesday, June 10th.—House of Commons: Black Wednesday—Coal is the Topic.

Thursday, June 11th.—House of Commons: Mr. Eden Picks a Winner.

Tuesday, June 9th.—Lord WEDGWOOD, who recently made a broadcast in which he advocated the surrender of the British Palestine mandate to the United States, was dealt a smart slap on the wrist to-day by various fellow-Peers. The House of Lords does not like that sort of thing—and said so pretty plainly.

"Treasonable," snapped Lord MOYNE, the former Colonial Secretary. Lord WEDGWOOD was so surprised at this description of a speech he thought eminently right and proper that he cupped his hand to his ear and asked a trifle hopefully: "Reasonable?"

When the mishearing was corrected, Lord WEDGWOOD assumed the expression of one who had been hit in the



ST. JOSIAH

Lord Wedgwood finds himself assailed from all quarters.

abdomen by the traditional chunk of old red sandstone. He certainly smiled a kind of sickly smile, but, to the apparent disappointment of some of his more severe critics, he did not curl

up on the floor—and the subsequent proceedings plainly interested him plenty.

Observing the effect of Lord MOYNE's shell, Lord CRANBORNE, his successor at the Colonial Office, sent over a few thunder-flashes.

"Fantastic, ridiculous, wicked, wicked and dangerous nonsense," said Lord CRANBORNE angrily, while the author of the speech so hotly assailed sat silent. Then he rose to defend himself (after Lord STRABOLGI had had a go and failed) and explained that he meant what he had said.

In true Wedgwoodian manner he carried the war into the enemy's camp by complaining bitterly of the "impertinence" of an official who had apologized for his speech. Was he—were they—in the Gilded Chamber by grace of the Foreign Office, or as Peers of the Realm, he demanded.

Nobody told him, so he tried the soft answer that is reputed to turn away wrath. Looking with fatherly—or avuncular—eye at unsmiling Lord CRANBORNE, he said he knew he had to say them cruel words, but knew, equally, that he did not mean them.

With which compromise (so reminiscent of the nursery) the discussion ended. But the attitude of the House remained distinctly chilly towards the occupant of the Impenitent Form.

In all the excitement everybody overlooked the real importance of the issue Lord WEDGWOOD had raised—the possible arming of the Jews that they might fight for their Palestine homeland. That issue will come up again.

The Duke of DEVONSHIRE mentioned that the former "stay put" orders to civilians had now been amended to something like "stay put—but sock 'em on the chin." But he hoped that little, individual, private, amateur efforts at "scorched earth" would not be indulged in if invasion came to Britain. That sort of thing had been taken care of in The Highest Quarters and even in Ministerial Circles.

Their Lordships nodded sagely.

The Commons held a jumble sale, with most of the political issues of the day piled invitingly on the stalls presided over by Ministers. Chancellor Sir KINGSLEY WOOD found a few not very eager buyers for his fine line in Finance Bills, but the purchasers looked the goods over rather superciliously. They had seen them before—ever since Budget Day, which seemed an æon or two ago, so much has happened in between.

But in the end Sir KINGSLEY, with the courteous air of a shopman who has made the customer believe that he

is always right—and has still sold him some old stock as the *dernier cri*—bowed his way out of the emporium, his task completed.



PATRIÆ DEFENSOR

Lord Mottistone gives a lead to civilians against the invader.

Sir LEONARD LYLE, who, his name notwithstanding, does not go in much for honeyed words, wanted M.P.s' speeches limited to 15 minutes each. Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, leading the House, did not think this would work—it never had. Said Sir LEONARD: "Most speeches would be vastly improved by being cut 50 per cent." Sir STAFFORD winced; other Ministers paled visibly.

"Ever thought of issuing coupons for speeches?" asked Mr. GEORGE ISAACS, but Sir STAFFORD merely shook his head. Perhaps he meant that many speeches lacked "points."

Mr. ATTLEE dealt crisply with the cads—and cadesses—who hand out white feathers to the un-uniformed. He refused a special badge for men who could not serve in the Forces, but pointed out that, in this total war, everyone was "in it," whether in glamorous uniform or unglamorous civvies.

Wednesday, June 10th.—Sir JAMES GRIGG, the War Minister, announced that the C.I.G.S., with the aid of the V.C.I.G.S. and occasional help from the D.C.I.G.S., is to have complete liaison with the Ministry of Supply.

Of course the A.C.I.G.S. will also play his part, and the House voted the whole thing V.G., even if a trifle difficult to follow in its initial stages.



"The Council gratefully acknowledges the receipt of more than five thousand letters wishing them success in the National Waste Paper Competition."

Sir JAMES was reading his little piece when Sir WILLIAM DAVISON stood up with a demand that the Minister should also "stand up and hold his head up a little." The Minister obeyed, and stood smartly to attention while he read the rest of the statement.

The SOLICITOR-GENERAL answered a legal question at such length that Members began a sweepstake on the time (if ever) it would stop. But protesting cries brought the recital to an apparently premature end, so the sweep was called off.

With this as an awful example, the SPEAKER appealed to Members taking part in the debate on the Government's coal plan to make their speeches snappy. Mr. LEVY wanted a precise definition of brevity as applied to speeches "as some indication to the Front Bench."

But the SPEAKER was not having any, and maintained an eloquent silence.

Sir JOHN ANDERSON, the Lord Privy Seal, spent some forty minutes explaining the past, present and future of the coal industry, but following speakers

took a less liberal view of the elasticity of brevity, and a good many "got in" during the day's debate.

There was little that was new in the discussion, in which the demand for immediate fuel rationing (made by Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD) and none at all (made by most Conservatives) formed the main clash. Labour men were dissatisfied with the small advance towards nationalization of the coal-mines; Conservatives were alarmed at the swift swoop towards that undesired goal.

So the debate was adjourned until the "next sitting day" as we now call to-morrow.

Thursday, June 11th.—The coal plan having—after a lot more talk—been approved, to most people's satisfaction, by 329 votes to 8, Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, the Foreign Secretary, entered with an expression of satisfaction on his face and a glass of water in his hand.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

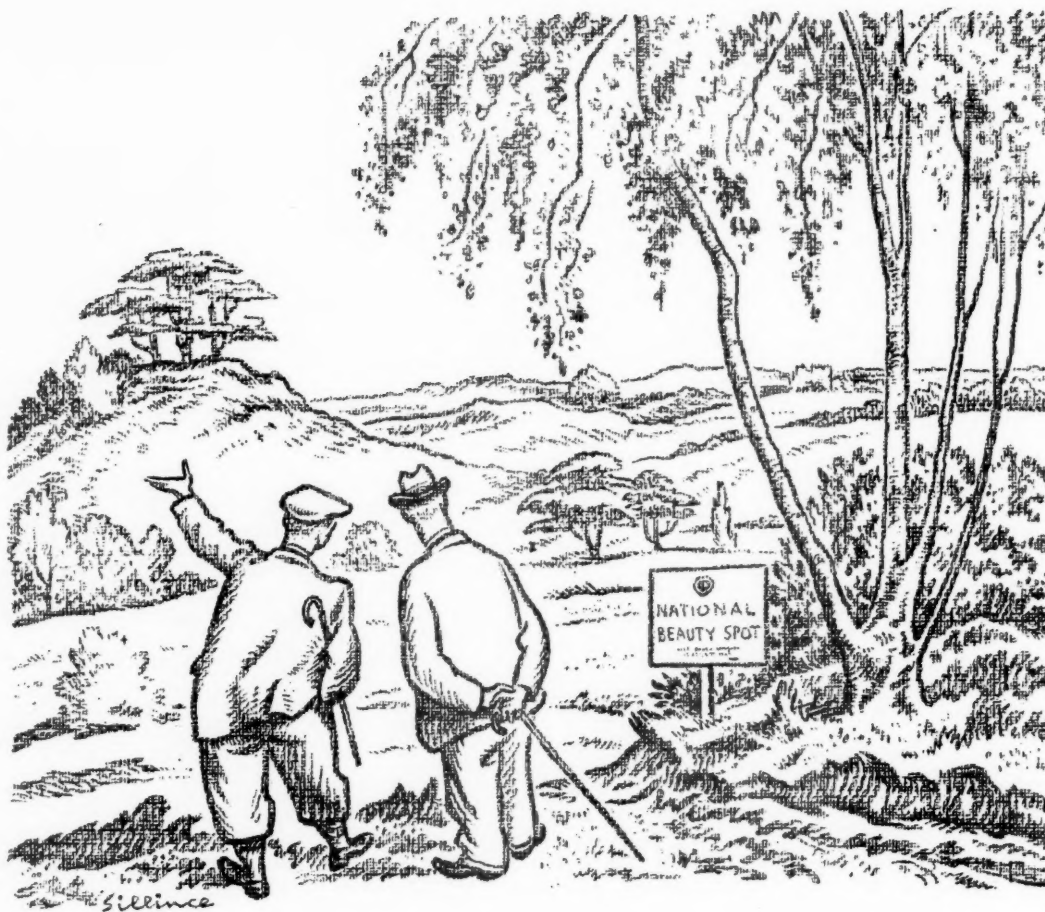
The expression was speedily spread to the faces of all Members when he announced that he and M. MOLOTOFF, the Soviet Foreign Minister, had signed a 20-years' mutual assistance pact, which would go on into the days of peace yet to come.

There was a hearty cheer for the Treaty, and another for its British author. There was also a gasp of amazement from most Members, who had had no idea that the distinguished Russian visitor had been in the country.

It was a strange but highly comforting sight to see Sir ALFRED KNOX and other erstwhile opponents of Russia cheering with the rest. It was magnificent—and war.

Rational English

WHEN a lodger remarked, "If you please, Instead of fish-paste for my Spare A's I'd prefer, Mrs. Lamb, A small portion of Monthly A," His landlady said, "Try some Spare B."



"... and in peace-time all this is one shimmering sea of tins and coloured paper."

Little Talks

ODD, is it not, how excited we are about its being a *thousand* aeroplanes? If it had been only nine hundred and forty we should have been quite sniffy.

That's our cricket training. All that flap about "centuries." When a chap gets into the nineties he's so careful that he gets out. But if he hadn't been "century-conscious" he might have made a hundred and forty-three.

No. I don't think it's a purely British thing. After all, there are ten Commandments, not nine.

Do you suggest that one or two might just as well have been left out?

Certainly not. What I mean is, this

"ten" complex does seem to meet a human need.

Naturally. All babies have ten fingers, after all. The only puzzle is that the whole of Europe should run the decimal system but we do not.

That's because Europe is still in the infant stage. We learned to count up to twelve before they did.

I'm not quite sure that they can yet.

I think the Nine-Point Group showed great restraint in not going one farther.

Like the authors of the *Thirty-nine Articles*? Yes, it must have been a temptation.

I wonder, by the way, that some of

these admirable Point-mongers, Plan-merchants and Charter-makers don't try a little legislation by reference, since that seems to be one of the things that mustn't alter.

Oh, come, surely in the *Better World* even our political language will be better?

I gather not. The highest hopes, the noblest aims, are still expressed in cotton-wool words like "economic co-ordination," "organizational inter-planning," and "under-privileged" or "lower-income" groups.

Roosevelt did pretty well, with his "freedom from want and fear," and so forth.

He did very well. And so did King George V before him. I'm not talking about them. No, the lads I'm talking about, or some of them, base their programme, very rightly, on the principles of Christianity. It's true they strike a somewhat "materialist" note as well, but there it is. And I wonder they don't go back to the beginning.

The Ten Commandments?

Yes. Very few people have much quarrel with them. But of course they do need bringing up to date.

You mean you'd—what's the word? "codify" or something?

No. I think the Government would say that in view of the extreme fluidity of the situation and the numerous phases of the ever-changing world-picture which it would be dangerous to leave out of account, the time was not yet ripe for consolidation.

So what?

Well, meanwhile, we might have a little touch of that delightful pastime—legislation by reference.

I never quite know what that means.

Well, suppose in some old Act of Parliament it says somewhere—I don't know whether it does—"The rule of the road is that all vehicles shall keep to the left."

Yes?

And suppose that the Government suddenly decide that British vehicles had better keep to the right on the roads as foreign vehicles do—

And British ships at sea.

Quite. Well, the Bill that came before Parliament wouldn't say: "In future all vehicles must keep to the right, and not to the left."

What would it say?

Probably the Bill would be called the "Miscellaneous Enactments (Repeal) Bill"—or perhaps the "Expiring Laws (Continuance) Bill." And in Clause 43, sandwiched between the taking of plovers' eggs and the redistribution of the clergy, you might find something like this:

"Paragraph (c) of sub-section (1) of Section 149 of the Hackney Carriage and Steam-rollers Act, 1842, hereinafter called 'the principal Act,' shall have effect as if for the word 'left' the word 'right' were substituted, and references to 'the left' shall be construed and applied as if they were references to 'the right,' save that as respects any dock or harbour or any premises held by or on behalf of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners the word 'left' shall continue to have effect as if it were the word 'left' and the fore-

going provisions of this Section accordingly shall be of no effect."

Golly!

But there would be more: "The definition of 'vehicle' in Section 83 of the principal Act shall be construed applied and interpreted as if after the word 'wheels' there were inserted 'and bathing-machines,' and as if the words 'Local Government,' 'four-wheeled coach' and 'except in time of war' were omitted."

Golly again!

That's "legislation by reference."

But you don't really want the planners to go about the Better World that way?

Not very seriously. Still, it would draw attention to their purpose. Suppose they took the Sixth Commandment and said, "After the fourth word of the Sixth Commandment we wish there to be added the words 'cheat thy masters or thy men, overcharge for thy goods or houses, withhold thy skill, service or property from the public good, deceive the Revenue'"—and so on.

I see the idea. What about the Tenth Commandment?

That I can't say. Indeed, there does seem to be the faintest invitation to covetousness in some of the gospels going about to-day. But, talking of "after the war—"

It's about the only permissible topic to-day.

What are you going to do in the Anglo-Polish-and-One-or-Two-Others War?

What is that?

I'm worried. "After the war"—if

you'll pardon the expression—the Poles and the Czechs and one or two others will want to do things to the Germans.

I don't blame them.

Ah, but we shall. Or some of us will. And what's more, we shall be expected to stop them. And, I don't see how we're to prevent the Poles from doing things to the Germans except by going to war with the Poles.

I think I should be a little lukewarm about that particular war.

Well, it has to be thought about. So many people seem to think we've only got to sign a Charter and everything's settled.

But didn't the Poles sign the Atlantic Charter?

I suppose they did. But I doubt if there are many copies among the particular Poles I have in mind.

What did the Atlantic Charter say?

I forget.

The best suggestion I've heard is that we should send Gandhi to the Japs to explain the doctrine of non-violent non-resistance.

Hardly fair to worry the Japs just now. By the way, have you ever looked up the Axis in *Who's Who*?

No. Is it there? I thought "Who's Who" was reserved for the respectable.

It should be. But this is an amusing lapse. Mussolini has a mile of "Publications" to his name, of course. Poor old Hitler has only one.

Mein Kampf?

Yes. Then the Top Wop has a lot of Recreations: "Violino—equitazione—scherma—automobilismo—aviazione."

"Violino" first? The Nero touch?

Yes. Hitler, on the other hand, has no recreations—and no clubs.

He's not my idea of a "clubman," certainly.

But what pleases me, after yards of stuff about these two thugs, is Joseph Stalin's shy little entry. Such modesty has seldom been excelled. Here's the whole thing:

"STALIN, Joseph Vissarionovich; Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars since 1941. b. Gori, Tiflis Province, 1879: m. Nadejda Sergeyevna Alleluya (d. 1932), two c. Address—The Kremlin, Moscow."

So now we know where to find the old chap! A. P. H.

o o

"To guard this vital area the Germans have placed around the northern and western approaches a vast belt of searchlights and guns, some 200 miles long and varying in depth from 20 to 30 miles."—*Daily Paper*.

Listen carefully for the bangs.

FROM ISOLATED POSTS

FROM a letter received: "I write to express the great gratitude of the men and of ourselves. It has been such a pleasure to take round these woollies and see the delight of the men and hear the next day that they'd been really warm the night before. These men have a very hard time and have to stand-to in all weathers with very little protection. The gifts provided by your Fund have made a very real difference to them." Please join in the service by sending your contribution. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

At the Play

"SKY HIGH" (PHENIX)

THIS vigorous and uneven revue might be described as another duet on the Hermonium. Not long ago our two HERMIONES, Miss BADDELEY and Miss GINGOLD, delighted us as the drolls of a revue at the Comedy Theatre. Here they are again, with Miss BADDELEY to present the fleshier types while Miss GINGOLD mounts the lecturer's dais, wears the canonicals of a nursery governess, and holds forth as one of those senior ladies of the stage whose enrolment as a First Witch in *Macbeth* seems almost to be type-casting.

Previously these two had with them Mr. WALTER CRISHAM and Mr. HENRY KENDALL. Mr. CRISHAM is now director of the revels and is amusingly engaged as a choir-boy, the Nightingale of Norwood, whose heart and voice are breaking in unison. But his chief occupation is to tread a measure, which he does with a sinuous elastic grace. Mr. KENDALL has been scooped by another management and his vehement versatility is missed. Mr. NAUNTON WAYNE, an admirably adroit comedian, takes his place, but his attack is of a gentle kind and is apt to be overborne by the powerful notes of the Hermonium, which is played for all it is worth by two pairs of hands and two pairs of feet, all very active at the keys and pedals. Mr. WAYNE, however, manages to score with his delightful burlesque of Mr. EMLYN WILLIAMS in full emotional flow as an evening star.

Far be it from me to encourage unpunctuality in playgoers, but it must be admitted that the prompt arrivals in this case may be a little dashed by some of the earlier items. If the ancient custom of "half-price at half-time" were still in being, those who took the opportunity at the Phoenix Theatre would be getting the best of the bargain. But they would miss a charmingly decorative finale to Part One, in which the ladies of 1890 sing (with astonishing prescience) the songs of 1900 and later. We are introduced to a Paddle-Boat party on the river, and when the choristers (in "the nines of the 'nineties") remind us of such dulcet numbers as "The Honeysuckle and the Bee" we may indeed murmur, in the manner of



BOTANY AND BICYCLES

MISS HERMIONE BADDELEY AND MISS HERMIONE GINGOLD



THE DISHEARTENED CHORISTER

MR. WALTER CRISHAM

EDMUND SPENSER, but not quite in his words, "Sweet Thames, run slowly till they end their song." It is an odd mixture of bustles and Boer War, but most agreeably does it take the eye and ear.

The Modern Muse is briskly represented by Miss ZOË GAIL and Miss ELISABETH WELCH. Miss WELCH has a rolling voice and a roving eye and is well equipped for a naughty excursion into the Olympian farmyard, concerned with Europa and the bull. This, if less than seemly, has style; and style, on the whole, is what the revue lacks. A multitude of authors and composers have contributed, and so the audience has to take the rough with the smooth. Among the smoother elements is a serious sketch of a park-bench encounter, written by Miss NINA WARNER HOOKE. This is good enough to give the two HERMIONES an opportunity for subtler performance, and very well they take it.

Such an interlude must make one more regret the crudity of some surrounding matter. Miss BADDELEY, for example, in a sketch about an Eastern charmer, is lost amid the heavy entanglements of Indian-love-lyrical farce. Moreover she is too clever to need reliance on physical disguise: her parts in this revue may need building up, but not her person. Miss GINGOLD could surely find something gayer than her address on bicycles, with its uninventive tableaux to follow.

The name of Mr. ALAN MELVILLE is attached to many of the items, some of them the best. The revue has an ingenious start which abolishes the tiresome routine of the opening chorus; after that it sags somewhat, but its projection never lacks energy and gusto, and the later reaches include some capital entertainment.

It is the mode nowadays for the actors to have something to say to the critics, and once more the latter may be said to receive very good notices. So let the two sides part in amity, awaiting the next composition "for Hermonium and Male Voices." But there will be a considerable and profitable interval before that is needed.

I. B.

Sidelight on the Paper Shortage

"More letters on fresh-water fish reach me."
Sunday Paper.

News from Iceland

MY DEAR MOTHER,—You will be glad to hear that I am on the point of leaving Iceland; unfortunately my departure has been marred by a curious incident involving our Mess, alleged arson and myself.

Four days ago we were unlucky enough to suffer a small fire in the Mess ante-room. One of the improvements we made to our plain Nissen hut has been the construction of a rather charming, if massive, Olde Englyshe Fireplace in Newe Icelandic Concrete. It was superficially all very Ideal Home, but it contained a canker in its bosom, namely, a wooden beam under the hearth-stone which in course of time (and very naturally when you come to think about it) became hotter and hotter until it finally burst into flame. Hence our fire. The damage was trivial, but a small section of the hut on either side of the fireplace had to be torn away to get at the fire. Let me say at once that this occurred on a Saturday when I was not in the Mess but engaged elsewhere in activities that are the antithesis of fire-raising.

There has also been one other phenomenon of interest. The Mess has been troubled with invisible rats. That is to say, late at night, light patterings of feet have been heard dashing to and fro over the ceiling, between the inner lining and the outer skin of the hut. Personally I was never convinced of the objective reality of the rats, for I am of sceptical disposition and I have never seen them, but there was clearly evidence of some faintly sinister inhabitant, be it rat or Icelandic troll, of our temporary home. Being nothing if not public-spirited, I conceived a plan for removing these presences once and for all whilst the hut was in course of repair.

The plan, like all good plans, was extremely simple. On Sunday afternoon, when the maximum number of officers are available, the hut would be filled with tear-gas. The presences, disturbed by this assault, would leave their hiding places, and on emerging, a little dazed, would be struck smartly over the head by one of the crowd of willing helpers. The plan was duly approved by the highest authority and put into effect.

It was, in my view, a complete success. Actually no rats or anything else were seen to emerge and the only casualty was a full Colonel in the R.A.S.C. who, unaware of the exercise, walked into the Mess at the height of

the attack and emerged thirty seconds later completely filled with tear-gas, thereby losing all interest in everything but my blood for the next two hours. But we had, so I believed, exorcised the Mess and proved it to be free from what may be described as the haunting.

So far so good. Unfortunately within the next half hour the Mess broke into flames. I do not propose to speculate on how the fire originated. It is possible, no doubt, that the heated gas-generators ignited the dry paper lining in some obscure way. It is equally possible that a spark from some careless onlooker's cigarette or some stupid cook's chimney did so instead. Who can tell? We cannot expect to have satisfactory explanations for everything. Be that as it may, our fire squads and stirrup-pumps worked wonders and, ably directed by me, the fire was well under control before the Mess was totally consumed. I suppose it was a wise precaution to call in the Fire Brigade, although it was a pity that the Fire Chief also arrived without a respirator and suffered accordingly, and that the fire engine, which had to go to the beach for its water-supply, should have got stuck in the mud and become half submerged as the tide rose. If a day is unlucky it is unlucky, and one can say no more.

But, unfortunately, after a fire follows a Court of Inquiry and, what is almost worse, a great deal of uninformed gossip. The Court of Inquiry was reasonably intelligent. By a

personally-conducted experiment I was able to convince the Court that it was practically impossible for the fire to have been caused by the gas-generator. The experiment was easily arranged. On the day of the Court of Inquiry it was blowing a gale and raining hard, with the result that when the generators were ignited in the open their temperature appeared quite low, low enough to handle. In point of fact I did suffer from one or two burns in the hand which handled the generators, but one does not want to make a song over small incidents of that kind; it was no business of the Court of Inquiry anyway.

But the gossip was a different matter. I do not say that it was malicious but I do say it was irresponsible. When I went to call on the American Headquarters a fire bucket was placed rather ostentatiously alongside my chair. When I went to a final dance at the Officers' Club, the secretary sighed and said, "Thank God the fire-station is next door!" and worst of all, when I attended a farewell cocktail party in another Mess, the Mess President asked if I minded wearing felt slippers and being searched for matches. I thought it was all in the worst of taste.

But the unkindest cut of all came from the Mess cat. I had always regarded the beast as purely ornamental. After all, what had it done to rid us of the rats? Nothing! Who was responsible for my gas-attack? It was. And on the morning after the fire the brute had the impudence to walk slowly over the grass in front of the Mess with a rat in its mouth, and to sit down on the steps of the ruined ante-room and proceed to devour the wretched object. If we had been alone I should have dismissed it with a smart kick. As it was . . .

There it is. So now I say good-bye to Iceland, land of fire and ice, land of fire and Courts of Inquiries, land of fire and— But honestly, there is no connection between the two events.

Your loving Son HAROLD.

Our Youngest War-Worker

"Mrs. Foster is a native of Wales, and her husband is serving abroad in the R.A.S.C. They have a daughter aged two. She joined the factory 17 months ago. Now she is in charge, under a foreman, of 14 important machines."—*Daily Paper*.



Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

An Autobiography

PERSONAL experiences of a kind not usually put on record do not in themselves ensure a more than superficially interesting autobiography. The reminiscences of a waiter, a tramp, a prostitute, a released convict or a discharged lunatic will convey new information to most readers, but if the writer has a commonplace mind and nature the result will not be literature. In the preface to his autobiography (*A Cornish Childhood*, JONATHAN CAPE, 12/6) Mr. A. L. ROWSE, swayed by the importance attached nowadays to social documentation, bases his hope that his book may have a contribution of its own to make to English literature on its working-class setting. Almost all the autobiographies of the past, he writes, have come from the upper or middle class, very few out of the working class. Nevertheless, the chief value of his book derives from his personal qualities, not from his picture of his early environment.

He was born in Tregonissey, a Cornish village, and his autobiography opens with an account of old Cornish customs, now for the most part obsolete. His father had a small shop, and neither from his father nor his mother, though he writes of both with affection, did he receive encouragement or sympathy in his desire for knowledge. Life was hard and primitive, and as they could not have appeased his restless curiosity even if they had wished to, they fell back upon "Little boys should be seen and not heard," which made him resentful and contemptuous, and drove him in on himself. From very early years his best moments were in solitude. He recalls his happiness as he listened to the voices of "the chaps of 'the higher quarter'" when they passed his house on Friday nights, singing hymns and sacred songs. "Their voices sounded sweet in the road outside, approaching, then receding uphill from the house, fading away in the distance. Even then they held an incurable nostalgia for the small boy who heard them mingled with sleep and drowsy warmth . . . that nostalgia which has underlain all my experience of life." The same sense of a felicity just beyond his reach is conveyed in another early memory—"A little group of thatched cottages in the middle of the village had a small orchard attached; and I remember well the peculiar purity of the blue sky seen through the white clusters of apple-blossom in spring." It was, he says, a kind of revelation, an inner resource and consolation of the same kind as in later years he found in *Tintern Abbey* and the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. Out of such moments as these he formed his undogmatic creed. Doctrine has meant nothing to him, nor has he anything to say about the mysterious spiritual enrichment reputed to well out of existence in simple village communities. "It is not possible," he writes, "to go on living the life of the people once you have developed an intellectual life of your own."

At eleven he won a scholarship to a secondary school, where he was very happy, never turning homewards without regret. To go to Oxford, which presently became his ambition, he needed scholarships to the value of £200, since he could expect no help from his parents, and these he eventually got, in spite of some serious illnesses—the grippe, appendicitis and a duodenal ulcer—and in spite of having to help at home and in the shop. Saturday, he says, was the worst day of all—chopping firewood for the week, weighing flour, measuring out lamp-oil for customers all day, selling oranges in the village, and in the evening

making up the books and bills. Remembering *Jude the Obscure*, who used to look from his Wessex field at the haze of the Oxford lights reflected in the sky, Mr. ROWSE, who is now a Fellow of All Souls, ends his book with "More fortunate than Jude, I was going to Oxford. Those lights have held my eyes ever since." With such a struggle as this behind him, Mr. ROWSE is naturally contemptuous of the "well-to-do young gentlemen who 'go proletarian,'" and finds the spectacle of middle-class intellectuals standing in a white sheet all the more ridiculous inasmuch as the working-class do not in the least appreciate a penitence for which they have not asked and which they do not even understand. The finest English achievements, he adds, are not the work of the people. He prefers CHAUCER to PIERS PLOWMAN, SHAKESPEARE to the Puritans, the Cavaliers and MILTON to the Levellers, and PITT, NELSON, DRAKE and the CHURCHILLS to ROBERT OWEN, FERGUS O'CONNOR and RAMSAY MACDONALD.

There are some desultory patches in this otherwise extremely interesting book. It is a good rule for autobiographers not to insert poetry of their own composition, but if they must yield to this temptation it is surely rubbing salt in the wound to claim, like Mr. ROWSE, that their poetry is "no worse than the worst Wordsworth." H. K.

Here, There and Everywhere

It was timely of Mr. HILAIRE BELLOC to review the scenery and sentiments of past travels for a people not used to being cooped up in its own island. The wise traveller would travel, if it were only to stock his memory; and a debauch of memories is not to be derided as the mere turning over of junk in a lumber-room. It is more like a critical survey of last year's seed with an eye to the future crop. Mr. BELLOC, travelling first and foremost as an historian, cannot help the past inspiring the future—even though his impressions of *Places* (CASSELL, 8/6) cannot, he says, be repeated in a ruined world. One hopes they can—with variations: like the tower of St. Vaast that he saw once rebuilt and may see rebuilt again. He may even see trees replanted on Patmos—trees need replanting all over the globe; and "happy little polities" in Germany (and elsewhere) replace that tumour in the body politic, the "power state." Sensitive, sprightly, gracious—with a kind word for a stray heretic, a stray Hun, and a sentence ending with a preposition—this is one of the most covetable of Mr. BELLOC's books.

H. P. E.

Check to the King

There are many morals, some sound, some dubious, which Mr. ROBERT SENCOURT would have us draw from his thoughtful study of *King Alfonso* (FABER, 12/6). The most interesting comes late in the day, when the King who wedded the modern mind to the old faith had gone and his Spaniards had made an equal mess of republicanism and dictatorship. The verdict voiced in disillusionment by the specialist MARAÑÓN (who had clamoured for the republic) was this: that if it were possible to find a single cause for Europe's present dilemma, it would lie in the defection of the Liberals—the world's greatest champions of humanism and tolerance—to the despotism of the proletariat. The pathetic story of ALFONSO, who did his best to render the monarchy—that "centre of infection"—a source of justice and security, is the story of a reasonable man hampered by extremists: from PIUS X and MERRY DEL VAL to the murderers of CÁNOVAS, CANALEJAS and DATO. "Spain outdid Europe both in Christians and criminals"; and while neither had much respect for the



Jock (hitherto silent, rising during a discussion on the merits of different regiments and countries). "MPH! I JUST ASK YE, WHAT WAD YOU CHAPS DAE IF SCOTLAND WAS TAE MAK' A SEPARATE PEACE?"

F. H. Townsend, June 19th, 1918

parliamentary system, the criminals tended to get most out of it. Mr. SENCOURT looks to the Portugal of SALAZAR to suggest a solution, ethical and economic, to the unhappy riddle of Spain.

H. P. E.

For a Daughter

Among the minor tragedies that the war has brought has been the separation of parents from their children sent, in order to avoid major tragedy, overseas. Very many fathers and mothers will, at first, be drawn for that reason to *A Child's Garland* (FABER, 6/-), in which JANE CARTON has gathered together, with her own explanatory comments, the things in literature which she used to read to her little daughter before their parting. POLLY, as obviously the child of bookish parents, might be expected to have fairly precocious tastes, but, though there is little or nothing in the book actually written for children, few intelligent small people would fail to enjoy most of it. The Bible and Shakespeare have sections devoted to them; then Fairies, the Seasons, Animals and Birds, Fun and Nonsense, Prayers and Graces, Our Country, Hymns and Carols, all have generous quotations. Many a little fair head, besides

small POLLY's, will be bent for happy hours over this book, while its readers draw from it rich capital of inspiration and interest for grown-up life.

B. E. S.

Another Little Man

In *Mr. Beamish* (ROBERT HALE, 8/-) we meet a whimsical little busybody who has many of the qualities of *Lob* and the hero of *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*. He collects unwanted books—"poor fellows that needed care and attention." He talks to himself, Dr. JOHNSON, *Mr. Mephistopheles*, BEN JONSON, cats, dogs and trees, and has a paper flower on his mantelpiece. Well, it is not really a paper flower to him, because it had been "plucked in Paradise" by the lovely *Beatrice* herself. It is all a little difficult for everyone but *Mr. Beamish*, for though his otherworldliness hurts nobody, his unworldliness and passion for fingering other people's pies might have made trouble. However, all comes right in the end for all the friends, including *Miss Hoyden* the dog, *Lancelot* the cat, and the new little copyholder who is made "all happy inside" by "po'try." Mr. HUGH RICHMOND, the author, writes pleasantly enough, but sentiment overpowers his humour.

B. E. B.



"Pass along inside the car, please."

Letters to a Conscript Father

MY DEAR FATHER,—I expect you'll be sorry to hear that Bairstow has gone into Station Sick Quarters with mumps. However, it will probably be a good thing from your point of view, because when he comes out we shall be able to give you all the griff about Station Sick Quarters ready for when you go in yourself.

The Medical Centre won't admit that it's mumps yet, but Bairstow thinks it is, and so do I; he's gone just the same shape as I did when I had them at school. They had a civilian specialist with an I Zingari tie to look at him, and he said it couldn't be mumps because some duct or other wasn't inflamed. So they're calling it nasal pharyngitis for the time being.

I showed Bairstow your letter about your friend the Catering Officer, and he says I'm to warn you about the pitfalls of tee-heeing, so that's what I'm going to do.

Your letter was a bit confused. I expect I'm right in guessing that it was written in the canteen, with the wireless on and somebody playing the piano and all that crockery being hurled into zinc baths, so I quite understand. All the same, it wasn't clear whether you were pleased because (a) you had actually had an informal conversation with an officer, or (b) the officer had turned out to be the manager of your old lunching-place in the Strand.

Well, whatever reason it was, I must

warn you, Dad, that it is unwise for a mere A.C. to get mixed up with officers. For one thing, the officers are not at ease (especially if you were a customer of theirs in peace-time) and, for another—and much more important—it is certain to get you a bad name amongst your fellow-erks. Then, as I'm sure you will see, you won't have any friends in either camp, because, however good a customer you used to be, no officer can be a real friend until after the war (unless you get a commission yourself, of course), and your fellow-erks will dismiss you at once as an airman who tee-hees. And, once you're dubbed a tee-heer, all hope of social security is past.

Tee-heeing mostly goes on in Messes, of course, and it is very easy to be unjustly suspected of committing it. For instance, say you're a corporal (you may be, one day, if you pay attention to all my gen), and a Flight-Lieutenant or somebody walks past patting his pockets looking for matches with an unlighted cigarette in his mouth, then you've got to be very stern with yourself. The impulse, I know, is to offer the officer a light; but remember that if anyone catches you at it, the first thing they'll say when they next meet you will be, "Nice bit of tee-hee last night, lighting cigarettes for officers right and left. I suppose your third will be through any day now?" And however much you try to explain that you'd have done the same for an A.C. (or for a fellow-corporal, at any rate), you'll never get them to believe that you aren't a tee-heer at heart. The same thing with officers' dogs. Suppress the impulse to pat them. Dog-patting is one of the most insidious forms of tee-heeing; that, and asking officers how much they paid for their bicycles, or whether they think it's going to keep fine for the cricket-match. Even if you stand to attention while you say these things, and don't take advantage in any way, it will still be used against you. People will think you're trying to impress officers with your personality, or your capabilities, and point out that you carry discipline to extremes by standing to attention while asking them what they paid for their bicycles.

So you see, Dad, the only thing is to steer quite clear of officers. The same thing applies, to a certain degree, with any superior rank. Corporals who tee-hee Sergeants, Sergeants who tee-hee Flight-Sergeants, and so on—they all get the same bad name. Of course I'm not saying that if you are absolutely unscrupulous you won't eventually get somewhere with a

planned and consistent tee-hee campaign. Some people, who don't care what happens to their reputations, have tee-heed their way right through from A.C. to Warrant Officer, but it's seldom that plain tee-heeing takes a man into the commissioned ranks. He would have to be able to tee-hee an Adastral House Board to manage that, and I believe such boards take more tee-heeing than even a confirmed tee-heer can manage.

Now, there are two exceptions to the rule that says tee-heeing is inadmissible. The first is in the case of mass tee-heeing. If a whole parade is told a joke by an officer, no matter how old or unfunny, then it is quite in order for them all to laugh. I don't want you to make any mistake about that. If, as a result of what I've said, you were the only member of a Flight to keep a straight face when the C.O. told the story about the parachutist saying "Now I suppose the bicycle won't work, either," then I should feel very ashamed. Such a course of action, you will understand, would suddenly cause the C.O. to feel that he was tee-heeing you, and he would resent this very much. Needless to say, the resentment of a C.O. is to be avoided if possible.

The other exception is in the case of tee-heeing Useful People of equal or only slightly superior rank. In the category of Useful People I include cook-house corporals (male or female), clothing-store personnel, main-gate policemen, Station carpenters or electricians, dental mechanics, etc., etc. I think everyone in the Service is agreed that almost any tactics adopted to get bigger pieces of butter, extra collars, unimpeded exits and entrances, or unofficial repairs to barrack-room chairs or petrol-lighters are completely justifiable. Some of the best-furnished accommodation at our Station is enjoyed by men who do a tremendous amount of tee-heeing—not to Officers, W.O.s, or people like that, but to Acting Corporals in charge of Squadron Stores, or L.A.C.s who distribute brooms and mirrors. And, far from losing caste by it, they are even employed to tee-hee on behalf of people who aren't cut out for tee-heeing themselves.

So it's just possible, after all, that if anybody did see you tee-heeing the Catering Officer the other day they will assume you were only after warmer breakfasts or lighter-coloured tea. I hope so, because then, instead of getting yourself ostracized, you will be, so to speak, invited everywhere. But *please* be careful.

Your loving Son PETER.

Birds in Convoy

ABLE Seaman Armstrong was not actually chipping paint. He appeared to have chosen the less irksome task of stripping the breech mechanism of the for'ard gun.

Even so I was puzzled to know why he was scattering crumbs on top of the breech. Asked to explain this variation in the stripping routine, he pointed to a little bird sitting on the breech mechanism lever and whispered "It's a sparrow, sir."

"It's a whitethroat," somebody corrected.

"Whitethroat! It's a warbler."

"You're adrift, old chap!" croaked the foc'sle funny man, in a voice of dismal condolence. "It was St. Valentine's Day last week. What'll you say to the missus, eh? Fog on the line, I shouldn't wonder."

Any bird that can sit on the breech mechanism lever, blinking in the sun, while an Able Seaman sets about stripping down the lock must be very tame or very tired.

There was a scuffle with one of our cats. They like the matting on the for'ard "bandstand" for catlike reasons of their own (ask Armstrong). Instead of being petted and offered indigestible tit-bits she was grabbed by two sailors and hustled down to the mess-deck. She turned nasty and savaged one of them (it probably made it more uncomfortable being carried by two sailors at once). Perhaps she scented competition—or birds.

Then Patrick came up in a very large pair of sea-boots (not his own), very much the First Lieutenant, to find out what had happened and why they had all stopped chipping.

"There are little sparrows all over the ship," someone confided to him.

"What do you mean, *sparrows*? You don't seriously mean that you've stopped work for that?"

"They're very tired, sir. We thought if they was frightened overboard they might take harm."

"There's one, sir. It's a white-throat."

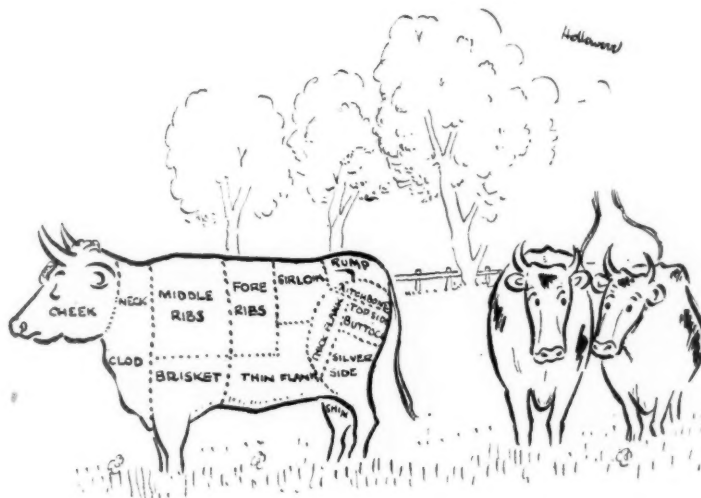
"Whitethroat! Nonsense! My dear fellow, a whitethroat is completely different from that. It's a kind of tree-creeper. Here! Someone go down into my cabin. In the bookcase, top shelf, you'll find a book with a lot of pictures of birds in it."

Patrick said that the picture of the tree-creeper was the best likeness, but if you looked at his attitude (he was still sitting on the breech) it might be a whin-chat, and so, feeling magnanimous: "Armstrong! There are lots of little tree-creepers or something on the foc'sle. The hands had better move back and carry on chipping on either side of the bridge for the time being."

"What, right over the wardroom, sir?"

"D'you think we can't stand the noise of a few chipping-hammers?"

However, I haven't Patrick's powers



"He's been touring on the foodstuffs demonstration."

of concentration. I gave up the idea of writing up the Expense Book till Stand Easy and went to see how they were getting on splicing an eye into our new two-and-a-half-inch wire.

Whipping one of the strands for the Buffer, I sensed Armstrong standing politely but firmly behind me.

"Look, sir!" he said triumphantly, and held out his hand, closed. ("Guess what I've got." "A broken striker." "Fool I was to let him strip the lock," were the thoughts that flashed through my mind.)

Inside his horny breechworker's paw sat a swallow.

"Cripes! Don't he look angry!" exclaimed the Buffer.

"What about the lock, Armstrong?" I asked sternly.

"Quite all right, sir. Only a spot of rust under sear part one. Job's finished, sir."

It certainly was the angriest-looking swallow I ever saw. It was something to do with the way the corners of his mouth ran down from his beak, and a bit because of the little whiskers that bristled round his lips, and a bit because of the red patch he had on either cheek and the way his crest came down over his eyes in a sort of frown. He sat in Armstrong's palm, fluffed out like a toy, too tired to move. Really it was a bit like Rodin's idea of the creatures coming out of the hand of the Creator—only this swallow was obviously furious at being suddenly created in an armed yacht hundreds of miles from land. Can you wonder?

One of the stand-off look-outs got down off the funnel-casing, and the upper-deck stoker left his work-bench and came over, spanner in hand. The leading steward put down his copy of Aldous Huxley and came over, asking

what was up. "It's a swallow," they explained to him, and he explained to the Supply Assistant, who was coming up from the port waist: "It's a swallow, Jack," and the Supply Assistant straightened his spectacles and explained to the Seaman Torpedo-man: "It's a swallow."

"It's a martin," said somebody. This contradiction struck an exhibitionist and unseemly note, and the contradicter was loudly told it was a swallow, and to shut his — mouth.

"He's flaked out," observed Armstrong. "What shall I do with him, sir?"

But the Buffer, admirable man, had already sent someone to fetch a tobacco tin of water. Dipping one finger in it, he put a drop on the swallow's beak. It ran down the edge. When it reached the whiskers the mouth opened.

"He feels with his whiskers," explained the Buffer. "When they're wet, he'll drink."

As usual the Buffer was right. Three drops and the swallow became interested, opened his eyes, shook his head, opened his beak and gargled it down.

"That's right. Take your tot while you can get it," said the funny man in the mournful voice affected by good clowns.

"Now what about that eye-splice, Buffer?" demanded Patrick, appearing round the funnel-casing, very much the First Lieutenant in a shiny new cap (mine, I maintain).

"S-sh, sir! There's a swallow!"

"Swallow! My dear fellow, don't you know a swift when you see one? Where's that book with the pictures of birds in it? I had it up on the bridge just now. They're all over there, making an awful mess, and we were

trying to photograph them sitting on the ventilators. Now, look here, we must try to get things organized. By the same token you can do 'Up Spirits' for me this morning."

"I've only been waiting for your beastly chipping to stop to get down to the Expense Book," I objected.

"Nonsense! You know you've done nothing but play with little birds all the forenoon. Haven't you?"

"Well, it's a bird migration stream," I said. "You're just as bad, trying to photograph them."

"Just for that, my dear man, you certainly shall do 'Up Spirits.' Look, here's Jack Dusty drawn the key already."

"No it isn't, sir," the Supply Assistant had to explain, "it's a canary cage. The Chief says we can put the swallow in the cage with the canary to rest a bit."

So the cage was opened and I ("Your hand is smaller than mine, sir," explained Armstrong) put the swallow in and settled him on the perch.

"After you, Claude," croaked the funny man.

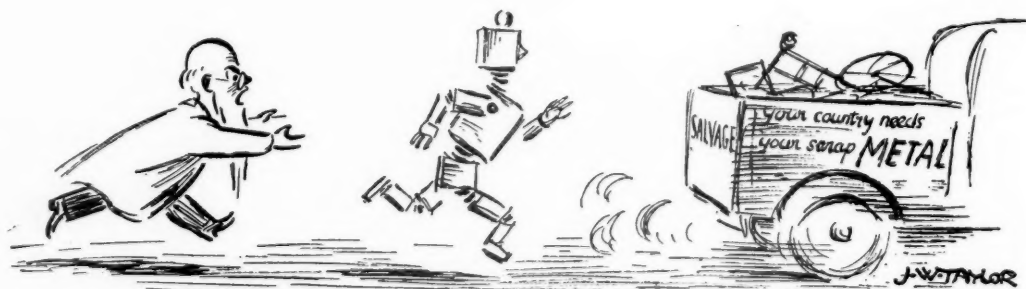
The canary sat at one end and the swallow sat at the other, still looking furious. The canary fluffed up his feathers till he was as big as the swallow. I never saw two more disgruntled birds.

But everyone else thought it was an excellent solution, and went on working with renewed vigour—that is, working as well as you can when the convoy meets a bird migration stream.

That's It, That Was.

"A 1937 T. TYPE M.C., very fast, a snip, £160, only once seen."

Advt. in Surrey Paper.



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